

PATRIOT

439th Airlift Wing • Westover Air Reserve Base
February 2003 • Vol. 30, No. 2



439th AW MISSION: Actively support national objectives on a global scale with ready, mobility forces

Is mobilization in my future?

Wouldn't you like a definitive answer to this question so you can plan your life this year? Bottom line is we just do not know.

We have been issued a general alert order to be ready and there isn't a day that goes by when somewhere in the country there is a Reserve or Guard unit being called to active duty. While the president is using his full range of national power options in dealing with Iraq, the military option is certainly one our nation is preparing for.

So what can you do to prepare? Don't ignore that fact that it may be you that will be activated. Use your mobilization guide to prepare yourself and your family for a call-up and possible deployment. Our job is to report and be ready to deploy within 72 hours, so there is not a lot of time.

We have a wealth of help for you at your unit, the military personnel flight, family support or on-line. Public Affairs and the legal office can help you with employer issues and questions. We have a lot of resources available to help you be ready, but only you can prepare your family. Take the time now.

Thanks for all you do!

by Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick
439th Airlift Wing Commander



Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick

Military officers association offers \$1,000 scholarships

ROBINS AFB, Ga. - The Military Officers Association of America will give \$1,000 college scholarships at random to sons and daughters of military personnel, including reservists in Air Force Reserve Command. Deadline to complete the online application form is March 1.

Formerly known as The Retired Officers Association, the MOAA will honor 100 college-bound or current undergraduate students with individual \$1,000 scholarship grants for the 2003-2004 school year. Of the few eligibility requirements, applicants must be under the age of 24 and provide basic information such as their SAT score and college. If an applicant served in the military before attending college, the maximum age for eligibility will be increased by the number of service years, up to five years.

Membership in MOAA is not mandatory, and there is no GPA requirement to be selected. Semifinalists will be notified by e-mail in March and may be asked to provide more detailed information. The scholarships will be dispersed by late August.

For more information and to apply for MOAA's Base/Post Scholarship program, go to <http://www.moaa.org/Education/2003> (AFRC News Service)

February 2003

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Volume 30
Number 2

"This funded Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of the **PATRIOT** are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force."

"The content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office of the 439th Airlift Wing, Westover Air Reserve Base. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated."

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Briefs

First quarter award recipients announced

Westover's Quarterly Awards Board has selected the following first quarter award winners for the fiscal 2003.

Airman:

SrA. Wayne A. Baptiste, 439 SFS

NCO:

TSgt. Victor M. Fuentes Jr., 439 AMXS

Sr. NCO:

MSgt. Earl E. Duncan Jr., 439 AMXS

Company Grade Officer:

Capt. Rex H. Steves, 439 AMXS

Civilian:

Ronald Seymour, 439 MSS

Civilian Supervisor:

Charles T. Van Gorden, 439 CES

Marine squadron changes command

A change of command in the Marine Air Support Squadron-Six took place on Dec. 15 in the fuel cell hangar.

Lt. Col. Kevin C. Sawyer took over command of the squadron from Lt. Col. Rui M. Moura.

Two hundred Marines are assigned to the support squadron, which is one of the many tenant units of other armed services based at Westover.

Antiterrorism web site available to reservists

MSgt. Scott C. Daigneault, antiterrorism NCO for the 439th Security Forces Squadron, has prepared a web page with information that reservists may find helpful.

The address is <https://www.mil.afrc.af.mil/439aw/msg/sfs/antiterrorism.htm>

Cover Photo

DIGGING OUT — SMSgt. Paul E. Beachell, 439th MXS, pulls a hydraulic test stand out of the snow near the flight line following the Jan. 4 Nor'easter. The storm dropped nearly a foot of snow on New England and forced the cancellation of half of the A UTA (see article and additional photos on page 3).

— photo by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe



photo by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

SIGNS OF WINTER — A Nor'easter storm dumped nearly a foot of snow on Westover January 3 and 4.

Storm blankets base; forces cancellation of half of January UTA

by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

A classic Nor'easter dumped nearly a foot of snow on the base Jan. 3 and 4 prompting Westover officials to cancel half of the January UTA.

Traveling reservists coped with up to two feet of snow with areas in New York and New Hampshire hit the hardest.

While reservists dug out of their homes on Saturday, Jan. 4, Westover was unusually quiet. Evergreen trees around the base seemed to bow in surrender under the heavy snow. The only sound was the muted whir of snow

plows clearing piles of snow from Westover's array of runways, ramps, roads and parking lots.

According to Westover meteorologist Robert W. Schwaber, the latest storm pushed the season's snow accumulation total to 36.6 inches — a quick jump on the 49-inch season average — and way above the 25.6-inch total from the previous winter season.

On Sunday, reservists resumed normal operation navigating around car-height snow banks. More snow was in the forecast for the following week.

MELTDOWN — Icicles added to the heavy snow cover in photo at right, and the first 2003 snowstorm really slowed things down at Westover during the January UTA (bottom right).



photo by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

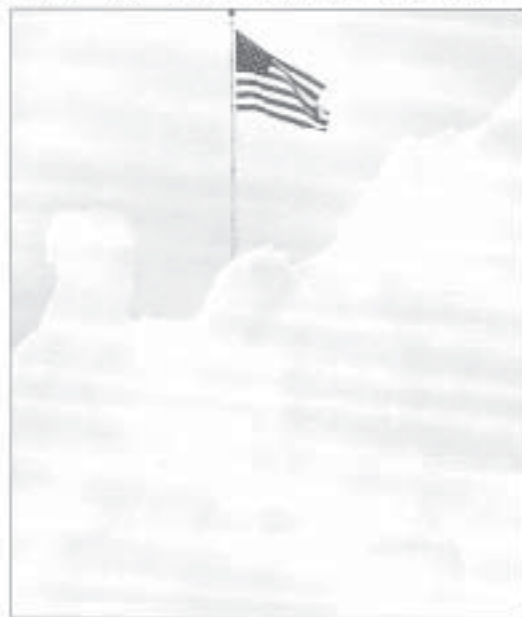


photo by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

STRIPES OVER SNOW — Looming snowfall frames the Stars and Stripes at the base ellipse.



photo by SSgt. Andrew Blasco

Chief Boyer retires after 28 years at base fire department

by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

Westover's fire chief reported to his job for the last time on Jan. 3, after protecting base resources for 28 years.

Philip E. Boyer, 54, retired after serving in a variety of positions since June 1974. He first arrived at Westover just two months after the Air Force Reserve had taken control of the base from the Strategic Air Command (SAC).

Starting out as a firefighter, Boyer moved up to lead firefighter, assistant chief of fire prevention, and finally to chief six years ago. Having worked so many different areas, Boyer felt it was time to take a new direction in his life. "I have met all of my career goals," he said. "It's time for me to take on new challenges, and to spend more time with my family."

Boyer and his wife, Gayanne, both retired on Jan. 3. Gayanne worked at



Boyer

Westover for 21 years as a real property specialist in civil engineering.

"We plan to enjoy our next challenges in life together," Chief Boyer said. "I'm having mixed emotions about leaving. I'm leaving a career that is oriented around leadership and family. I'm leaving part of my family behind – the firefighters."

Boyer, who lives in Ludlow, plans on keeping tabs on Westover. He will also spend more time with his six grandchildren who live in East Longmeadow, Chicopee, Georgia and Texas.

The fire department plans a retirement party for Boyer on Jan. 31 at the Knights of Columbus in Chicopee.

AFRC picks assistant chief as best civilian fire officer

Westover's Assistant Fire Chief Charles T. Van Gorden is the best civilian fire officer in Air Force Reserve Command for 2002, officials recently announced.

Van Gorden, assigned to the fire department since May 1995, received his award from Col. David Sweat, AFRC civil engineer, during ceremonies in Kansas City, Mo., last year.

"Being told you're the 'best of the best' in Air Force Reserve is a pretty rewarding accomplishment," Van Gorden said. He credited the fire department staff's professionalism as the reason for his command-wide honor. "Without good people to supervise, I wouldn't



Van Gorden

have gotten this award in the first place," Van Gorden said.

Fire Chief Philip E. Boyer cited Van Gorden's leadership skills and accomplishments in his award package. Besides running the base 911 center, Van Gorden is the primary logistics officer and recently developed two software programs. He was a program facilitator for headquarters AFRC to replace the existing computer training program at the fire department.

Local recognition of Van Gorden's award took place in December when Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander, presented the award to Van Gorden during a commander's call for civilian employees.

Army National Guard soldiers to augment base security operations

by staff and AFRC News Service from a DOD news release

WASHINGTON – The Army National Guard is due to arrive at Westover in February to help protect the installation.

The Army Guard is scheduled to send a platoon-sized element to the base at the beginning of the month. That number could be about 50 soldiers, said Maj. Timothy S. Donnelly, acting commander of the 439th Security Forces Squadron. "Once they become familiar with our security operation and standards, they will be completely integrated into our base security," he said. Members of the 439th SFS have been activated since October 2001.

"Our intent is to reduce the burden on the Air Force security forces personnel, in particular those Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members who are serving into a second year of mobilization."

- Thomas F. Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs

Mobilized Air Force Reserve Command security forces personnel may return home earlier than anticipated because of a memorandum of agreement signed by the Departments of the Air Force and Army.

Under the agreement, the Army will mobilize approximately 9,000 Army National Guard soldiers. Westover is one of 163 Air Force installations in the United States where the soldiers will augment security.

"We are leveraging all of our active and reserve assets, in the spirit of joint operations and inter-service cooperation," said Thomas F. Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs. "Our intent is to reduce the burden on the Air Force security forces personnel, in particular those Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members who are serving into a second year of mobilization. We believe this is a prudent and judicious use of our reserve component forces."

The Army will augment security to enhance force protection at stateside Air Force installations for up to two years while the Air Force phases in permanent solutions to address its long-term force protection needs. Long-term solutions might include shifting military resources to stressed career fields, contracting security and making better use of technology, said Department of Defense officials.

National Guard soldiers mobilized for this mission can expect to be ordered to active duty for one year. Mobilization figures for both services will fluctuate in the upcoming months as the mobilization, transition and demobilizations occur.

Holiday house fire wreaks havoc

by SMSgt. Sandi Michon

Just one day after opening their Christmas gifts, the Gontarek family lost their gifts – and almost everything else – to a devastating house fire.

Kevin Gontarek, Westover Club manager since August, was visiting relatives in Rhode Island when he learned of the fire. His pastor had recognized the Gontarek house from local news coverage and tracked Kevin down in Rhode Island. "My wife Sue took the call," Kevin explained. "I came downstairs and saw her on the floor crying and I initially thought something happened to her mom," he said.

"When she told me our house had burned, I was stunned. It seemed unreal. How could you be gone for only two days and everything you left is gone?" Kevin related.

The losses were particularly painful as the Gontareks had settled into their rental home just four months earlier, after living in a hotel for six weeks – and they had no insurance. "We spent a month fixing it up – it was in really rough shape when we moved in. We just got it to where it felt like home," he said.

As disbelief spawned reality, Kevin's next reaction was to locate shelter for his family. After calling the base to secure billeting for the night, the Gontareks headed back home, or rather, what used to be their home. Kevin and Sue walked through the rubble with flashlights, and even in the dim light, the scene was grim. The smoke alarm still beeped softly beneath the debris.

They both cried, but tears of joy mixed with tears of grief as they both played out the what-ifs. They were thankful no lives were lost. "What if I had been there and tried to save our possessions and got trapped in the fire" was one scenario Kevin suggested, "or what if Sue had died, or the kids..." Kevin's voice trailed off.

Despite the grief, Kevin became resolute to rebuild their lives. They learned of a two-bedroom condominium in Agawam which would allow their two children, Abbey, 7 and A.J., 10, to attend the same local school.

Four days after Christmas, the church collected donations and church members brought four truckloads of practical supplies to the condo. "We watched in awe," Kevin explained. "They wouldn't let us help. 'Just sit back and watch God work' they said."

Another local church Sue had visited responded with donations and monetary collections and the local Red Cross provided immediate needs like mattresses and other household items.

As they attempt to resume "normal" life, the lost items list grows. "You go to sweep the floor and realize you have no broom. You make a pot of pasta and the colander is missing," said Kevin, who loves to cook. "All the stuff you took for granted – it's not there," he explained, but then clarified his new perspective by adding, "It's just stuff."

Even so, some things are irreplaceable. Sue's eyes filled with tears when she spoke of the destroyed videos of her son and daughter's earlier years... or the burned afghans that were handmade by her mother and antiques given by her now-deceased father.

The Gontareks are overwhelmed by the kindness of so many, but Kevin admits that it has been very humbling. "I much prefer to be on the giving end," he explained. Both Sue and Kevin believe all the details of their situation have happened for a reason. "God has a purpose in all of this... in time He will reveal the extent of that purpose," they said.

The Gontareks figure that it will take three to four months to set up housekeeping, but they also hope to find other housing so their son and daughter can both have a bedroom. "It's been hard on them," Kevin said. "Abbey's constant activity seems to be her way to avoid facing the loss of all her belongings," he observed. Kevin thought his son A.J. was taking it the hardest. "To help him adjust to our move, he picked out the paint and wall hangings. He had just made it home, and now it's gone," he said.

Although much of the items donated to the Gontareks are used, both Kevin and Sue say they have received a whole new outlook on life. "You don't need as much stuff as you think you do," was a new thought, as was, "Don't sweat the small stuff – it's not worth it." But most importantly, both agreed that their experience has brought them a deeper, stronger faith that all will be okay. "God has and will take care of us," they said firmly.

Westover's Chiefs' Council is taking donations for the Gontarek family. Contact CMSgt. Kathy Wood at Ext. 2876 for more information.

"When she [his wife] told me our house had burned, I was stunned. It seemed

unreal. How could you be gone for only two days and everything you left is gone?"

**Kevin Gontarek
Westover Club Manager**



BEFORE AND AFTER — Abbey and A. J. Gontarek open their gifts on Christmas day (above). One day later, (below) a house fire consumed the tree, their gifts and most of their belongings.

photos courtesy of the Gontarek family



Westover commemorates African-American History Month

by Maj. Wilson Camelo

The contributions of African-Americans and all those serving in the military will be commemorated in February during National African American History Month.

At Westover, the month will serve as a time for reflection and appreciation for the contributions all African Americans have made to the wing and the Air Force, said MSgt. Lisa A. Spence-Elder, NCOIC of the wing's Military Equal Opportunity office.

While many have heard the heroic tales of the Tuskegee Airmen and The Buffalo Soldiers and may associate the celebration with these and other historical figures, Spence-Elder said it's also a time to recognize the day-to-day contributions of all African Americans. And locally, they are going a long way toward bettering race relations in the 439th AW, she said.

However, the role of the Tuskegee Airmen can't be overstated, she said. Having recently returned from the Tuskegee Airmen International Conference, Spence-Elder said today's young troops need to learn about

this and other historical events.

The Tuskegee Airmen's resounding success in World War II - where they destroyed or damaged more than 400 enemy aircraft, flew more than 15,000 sorties and never lost a bomber in 200 combat escort missions - helped convince the Army Air Forces that full integration could work. As a result, in the spring of 1948, the early Air Force was the first branch of the military to begin moving toward integrating its ranks.

Soon after, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981, fully integrating the armed services, and created a Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces to help carry out his order.

Today, Spence-Elder says race relations have definitely improved, but there is still far to go.

"The biggest lesson we're still trying to teach is to understand and accept people for



Spence-Elder

who they are," she said. "We're not all the same, and it's OK to recognize people's differences and not feel self-conscious about those differences. As a result, our overall goal as an office is to educate commanders on the diversity of their units to ensure they are being inclusive for all cultures."

At Westover, African Americans make up approximately eight percent of the wing, according to MEO. Spence-Elder said the race climate at Westover overall is very good, but she'd like to see that percentage increase to better mirror the community and the Air Force, where African Americans make up about 16 percent of the total force.

The overall situation, however, has certainly improved as racial minority representation in the Air Force has risen from 14 percent in 1975 to 27 percent today, according to the Air Force Personnel Center.

Spence-Elder said her goal for this year's African American History Month is to increase the awareness of the commemoration and to plan events at the base. Those interested in assisting in the effort may contact her at Ext. 3581.

Payment comes due for abuse of government credit card

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

Your government credit card can be your best friend when on orders, but the plastic card can lead to grief if you don't treat it with care.

Westover reservists are less likely than the national average among those in uniform to have problems with delinquent payments and misuse of government credit cards, but they are not immune to financial irresponsibility.

In an extreme case, one wing member was discharged, and others have been disci-

plined since use of the cards became widespread.

If you use your government credit card while on orders you are expected to pay promptly upon receiving a mailed bill from the credit card company, said Lt. Col. Theresa A. Negron, staff judge advocate. The credit card company will report individuals to their units who have not paid their bill after 30 to 60 days following the credit card transaction.

A first-time delinquency can lead to a warning, counseling or reprimand. A pattern of delinquent payments can prompt discipli-

nary action, including demotion or Article 15 proceedings, Negron said.

Each month, members' records of transactions are sent to unit orderly rooms where they are reviewed for unauthorized use and misuse.

"The commanders are doing a good job of communicating policies on misuse of the government credit cards," Negron said.

Those who use the government credit card while not on orders or for unofficial transactions while on orders are subject to a range of disciplinary action from counseling to discharge.

Limited tax assistance available for reservists on inactive status

ROBINS AFB, Ga. - Unless on active duty during tax preparation time, Air Force reservists are not entitled to Air Force tax assistance through base legal offices.

Due to manning constraints and regulatory restrictions on legal assistance, AFRC installation and wing legal offices do not offer tax preparation and filing services to reservists in an inactive status. However, unit reservists participating in an inactive status are entitled to mission-related legal assistance - wills and powers of attorney.

Reserve legal assistance officers should be able to address specific tax questions from members on active duty as part of their legal assistance program. These officers should also be able to direct activated military members to the closest active-duty location offering

full tax preparation services. Tax preparation centers are found on most active-duty military installations and normally operate from late January to April of each year.

Reservists on active duty should present their identification cards and orders to the personnel at the tax center to show their entitlement to the service. The military services operate tax centers on installations, ships at sea and at deployed units throughout the world.

Overall, service tax programs save service members and their families more than \$57 million. And, with electronic filing and direct deposit, service members often receive refunds in less than a week.

(AFRC News Service)



TSgt. Ronald J. Buonanducci

Patriot People

Name: Ronald J. Buonanducci

Rank: TSgt.

Age: 41

Address: South Windsor, Conn.

Unit: 439th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Position: Aircraft maintenance technician

Civilian position: Field service technical representative

Favorite food: Italian

Years of service: 19

Favorite sport: Football

Favorite hobby: Weightlifting, movies

Ideal vacation: Hiking

Best way to relax: Movies/playing with my kids

Preferred entertainment: Movies

Favorite hero: My dad

Favorite music: Jazz

Favorite movie: Air Force

Favorite aircraft: C-130

Pet peeve: Wet UTAs

What would I do if I won \$1 million: Buy a vacation home on the beach

photo by SrA. T.R. Ouellette

Patriot Praises

Enlistments:

TSgt. Murray, Bernard S.
SrA. O'Connor, Mark T.
SrA. Seddon, Dana M.
A1C Berghaus, Angela M.
A1C Ellison, Todd C.
A1C Morris, Kenneth W., II
Amn. Rodney, Andrew L.

Retired:

Maj. Manning, Catherine R.
SMSgt. Groeber, William D.
MSgt. Janeczek, Paul J.
MSgt. Ohearn, Michael J.
MSgt. Perreault, George A., Jr.
TSgt. Linton, Robert B.
SSgt. Brotherton, Peter A.
Boyer, Gayanne
Boyer, Philip E.

Thirty Years of Federal Service Certificates:

Halla, Richard W.
LaVallie, David E.

**439th Airlift Wing
Honor Guard
needs you! Call
MSgt. Tom Roe at
557-3342**

Awards and Decorations

Aerial Achievement Medal

TSgt. Jennifer Cutler 439 ASTS

Air Force Achievement Medal

TSgt. William F. Brooks 439 MXS
TSgt. Teri Destefano 439 AMDS
TSgt. Sabine Dietrich 439 AMDS
TSgt. Corey E. Fagullar 439 MXS
TSgt. Wesley G. Larson 439 MXS
TSgt. Raymond B. Morehouse 439 MXS
TSgt. William C. Padden 439MXS
TSgt. David M. Shattuck 439 MXS
TSgt. Mark Tourigny 439 MXS
SSgt. Grace Barnes 439 MXS

Air Force Commendation Medal

Maj. Martin B. Dorey 439 AES
Maj. Diane M. Murphy 439 AES
Capt. James C. Miller 337 AS
1st Lt. Warren D. Smith 439 AES
SMSgt. McDonald R. Molina 439 AES
SMSgt. Ralph A. Jamieson 439 MXS
MSgt. David E. Berube 439 MXS
MSgt. Michael M. Cuccouia 439 MOF
MSgt. Michael F. Drenzo 439 MXS
MSgt. Robert J. Rock 439 MXS

MSgt. Darrell J. Tripp 439 MXS
TSgt. Jean M. Allison 439 AMDS
TSgt. Kimberly A. Babin 439 MSS
TSgt. Aidan F. Evelyn 439 MXS
TSgt. Joseph C. Letourneau 439 AMDS
TSgt. Scott A. MacNevens 439 AES
TSgt. Shane L. Newhart 439 AES
TSgt. John J. Shannon 85 APS
SSgt. Edward J. Gazaw 439 MOF
SSgt. Shane E. Mortimer 439 AES

Meritorious Service Medal

Col. Sarah F. Waterman 439 ASTS
Maj. Mary McKenna-Colvin 439 AMDS
Capt. Dennis Bromery 439 AMDS
SMSgt. Albert F. Trychon 439 AW
MSgt. Joseph A. Beckman 439 MOF
MSgt. Anna P. Bradshaw 439 MSS
MSgt. David C. Pierrepont Jr. 439 ASTS
MSgt. Patricia A. Taylor 439 SVS
MSgt. Daniel P. Hickey 439 MXS
MSgt. Michael W. O'Heame 42 APS
MSgt. Alan D. Parrott 42 APS
MSgt. Stephen H. Rehm 439 AES
MSgt. Keith M. Taylor 85 APS
TSgt. Ronald P. Girard Jr. 439 AMDS
TSgt. Allan S. Reed 42 APS

Maintenance volunteers replace tires on World War II bomber

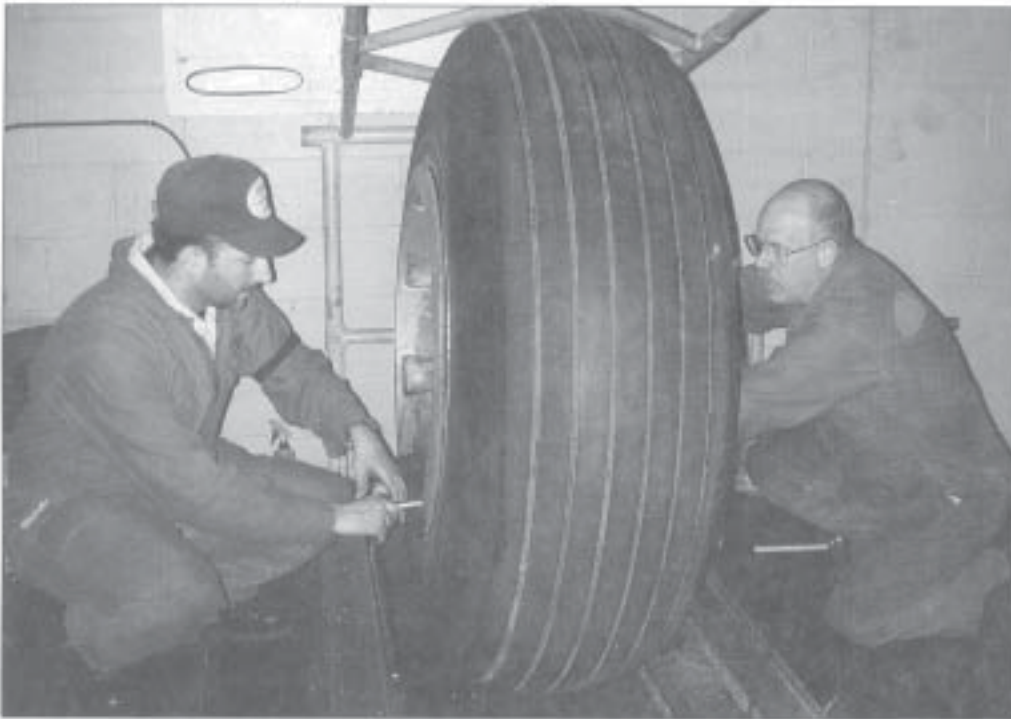
Article and photo by
SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

When the rubber meets the runway, the B-29 Superfortress beats the C-5A Galaxy, at least with the size of its landing gear.

Four Westover maintenance workers recently volunteered to replace the tires on

the famous World War II bomber that is displayed at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, Conn.

Although the B-29's main gear only included four wheels compared with 28 on the C-5, the maintainers found the bomber's 55-inch tires were 8 inches taller than the Galaxy's.



TIRE WORKS — MSgt. Roger A. Dager, left, and TSgt. Joe Stefferson work on the tire of the B-29 Superfortress that is on display at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, Conn. Dager and Stefferson were among four maintenance volunteers replacing the tires on the main landing gear of the famous bomber. Above right, a Superfortress lands following a World War II mission.



Courtesy Air and Space Museum

"Once we got the rims out of them, it still took two people to roll the tires," said MSgt. Steven Skowron, day shift supervisor in the 439th Maintenance Squadron's aero repair shop. "If they start the wobble, they can get away from you."

Museum officials called Col. Charles A. Brown, 439th Maintenance Group commander, for help with replacing the tires in December. Brown consulted with Skowron about the feasibility of the project, and let the museum staff know it could be done.

This is the second time in recent history that Westover has helped the Connecticut museum staff with its aircraft displays. In October 2002, a C-5 aircrew airlifted the sections of a RB-47E Stratojet from Westover to Hill AFB, Utah, for display at the museum there.

Also volunteering with Skowron were MSgt. Roger A. Dager, TSgt. Joe Stefferson, and SSgt. Richard I. Barry Jr.

While Skowron and his staff are busy with the ongoing maintenance of the C-5s, he hoped that the B-29's new tires would be ready for the bomber at the museum some time in February.

PATRIOT

PATRIOT online: <http://www.afrc.af.mil/439aw>

February UTA schedule

A UTA Feb. 8-9

B UTA Feb. 22-23



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Published monthly for Patriots like A1C Adam D. Jackler, from Goshen, N.Y., and 2,549 members of the 439th AW at Westover ARB, and geographically separated units.